

Indian Affairs Committee

Opening Slide

Good afternoon everyone. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to speak with you about the new regional library project to serve McKinley County and the surrounding areas. My goal today is to seek your advice and gain your support for this important project.

Next Slide

For the official record, my name is Tammi Moe, I work for the City of Gallup. I am currently the Director of the Octavia Fellin Public Library, the Rex Museum, Red Rock Park museum, the historic El Morro Theatre and 2nd Street event center. I am a transplant to New Mexico, having moved to Gallup in the spring of 2017.

Pre-Gallup I spent three years working for the Pueblo City and County Library District in Colorado after I returned from living overseas in Qatar where I worked for Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, the Consort of the Emir of Qatar for 10 years. Sheikha Moza built Education City and Qatar Foundation. This was a way to provide access to western-based higher education in the Arabian Gulf after 911.

I am an archivist and digital curator specializing in the preservation of cultural materials, both tangible and intangible. In 2014 I was awarded a \$1.2 million grant **by the Qatar National Research Fund** for a three-year project to document and digitize the primary source materials about Qatar in five different countries. Because of this project I was selected as one of 10 people, who represent human achievement. The picture on the left of the screen, is an international marketing piece created for Qatar Foundation's Achievers campaign

Fast forward to 2017, six weeks after arriving to my new position as Deputy Director in Gallup, the Library Director asked me to plan her retirement party and she was gone by July. I was the interim director for 7 months and officially hired as the Director in February of 2018. Here you will see two newspaper articles from when I was recognized for Distinguished Public Service by Governor Grisham in 2019 and received the much coveted, I LOVE MY LIBRARIAN award in 2022 for which Senator Munoz recognized me in the 55th Legislative session. Thank you, Senator Munoz.

I came to Gallup with the intent of staying two years to build a community archive. I had not planned for all of this. I bring an international perspective on libraries, archives, and museums.

Next Slide

The public library has been the cornerstone of the Gallup community for more than a century. Over the course of time the location has changed, along with the collection, services, and type of programs offered. The story begins in 1920 when the Philanthropic Educational Organization or (P.E.O.) Sorority donated 50 books for placement in the Gallup Community House as they worked to create a public library in the basement of Gallup Central School. The use of the library was free, a \$1.00 deposit was charged for a library card. The P.E.O. made plans to expand the collection, they hosted a benefit tea and book "shower". Local organization made monthly contributions to purchase books and in 1926 Gallup Town Council appropriated \$500 to the library and paid a local woman \$10/month to staff the

library from 3:00 – 5:30 P.M., three days a week. In September of the same year, Gallup's Town Board and several local organizations made plans to erect a new library building on the old city jail site. The community came together and \$1500.00 was raised through events staged by local organizations. The new library would belong to the public and would be supervised by the Town Trustees. The new building was opened on April 26, 1927. The City Council voted to officially assume responsibility for the Gallup Public Library on May 29, 1936. The library's namesake, Octavia Fellin, returned to Gallup in 1947, to visit family on her way to her new job at the San Francisco Public Library. She volunteered to work that summer at the Gallup Public Library. In October she was hired as the librarian of the Gallup Public Library, a position she held for 43 years. That year, the town of Gallup appropriated \$4,000 in its budget, and the County provided \$1000, a 45% budget increase, to accommodate the extension of library services to McKinley County.

Octavia began to campaign for a new library building in 1949; because the old building was "woefully inadequate." The public library was a small crowded stone building, with an outhouse. The city council issued a \$65,000.00 bond to construct a new facility in 1950. The chamber of commerce contributed \$13,500.00 to create an exhibition space in the proposed building for its southwest Indian Art collection. The new Gallup Public Library opened on December 22, 1951 along with the Museum of Indian Art. The building was remodeled and expanded in 1968, nearly doubling in size. A performance arts wing was added in 1985. The Gallup Public Library was renamed the Octavia Fellin Public Library in 1990. Due to overwhelming need, the City purchased and remodeled a bank building one block away from the main library building to create what is now the Children & Youth Branch in 2003.

Next Slide

The City Council funded a library building feasibility study in 2013 to assess the structural problems in the current building and to identify possible sites for a new state-of-the-art building. The City Council approved an area north of Route 66 between 2nd and 3rd streets on February 9, 2021. The library is now a City of Gallup department, and McKinley County residents receive services for free, out of county members pay an annual fee. OFPL is the only public library for McKinley County and the Southeast District of the Navajo Nation. OFPL is on a new trajectory and continues to change as an institution to reflect our communities needs. We actively work to create collections, workshops, and interactions rooted in people's empowerment. The collective trauma in our community cannot be underscored enough.

This guides our responsibility in being a positive and trustworthy institution. Public libraries are really like the swiss army knife of public service, or the mortar that holds the bricks together. We are continually changing and adapting to our communities needs. Here you see an editorial written about the public library's continued service during the pandemic when the glaring and obvious lack of infrastructure in rural areas and underserved communities surfaced as government institutions scrambled to respond. We are in the business of helping people without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, economic strata, or background. I am passionate about the power of public libraries to change lives. And I will fight to the end for what I know to be true.

The library's resources, services, and programs, are substantial, considering our limited funding, staff, and space. You should all have a copy of our membership booklet that you can go through to see the mission and vision and see what the Octavia Fellin Public Library offers.

Next Slide

Outside of regular programming the library has partnered with Google, NASA, the Smithsonian, the American Anthropological Association, film makers like Travis Holt Hamilton, Katrina Parks, and authors like Jimmy Santiago Baca, and Anne Hillerman to support economic development, and education and cultural enrichments.

Next Slide

Why am I here today? To quote a fellow library advocate, "Libraries Can't Live on Love Alone! It is my job to inspire and advocate. Libraries require a lot of resources. Quality library services require funding, staff, and facilities. Which is at the heart of my ask today.

Next Slide

- The Gallup Public Library is over 100 years old! We need a new building. The main library was built in 1951 – outdated and problematic. No fire suppression, not ADA compliant. The library is housed in two separate buildings which was meant to be a temporary solution 20 years ago! There are structural issues in both buildings. The Children & Youth building has inadequate load-bearing floor which prevents us from adding anything or expanding. Children and parents cannot use the library together during the same visit. Staffing two buildings is difficult with our limited personnel. Neither building is energy efficient.
- 40,000 registered users, 51% reside outside of Gallup, in McKinley County. Our designated service area is a population of 22,000 which is also what we are funded for. We have inadequate space for current services and programs and we cannot expand. Between the two buildings we have 26,000 SF and we need 55,000 SF. We are lacking conference rooms, community meeting spaces, a large enough MakerSpace, outdoor programming space, and parking.
- 100,000 books, audio books, and movies
- 30,000 downloadable e-books and audio books
- Over 500 programs annually
- We Read, We Talk Book Club has 70 members
- OFPL MakerSpace with a dedicated makers educator offering access to 3D printers, laser engraver, Cricut, Kiln, and more
- Public Computers, 24/7 Wi-F

OFPL offers all of our services, collections, and programming free of charge. A new building would provide a multifunctional space for people to interact, learn, and grow.

Next Slide

Consider the social determinants of health. In nearly every category the foundation is literacy and numeracy. If you do not have the ability to read and write, process math, and apply critical thinking the impact on your overall opportunities, quality of life, and giving back to the community are severely diminished. This should raise the alarm when you look at the Nations Report Card in your handouts that show the 2022 Reading State Snapshot Report for New Mexico public schools.

Next Slide

I would also urge you to consider the root of the problem, systemic racism, and how that impacts early childhood development. I also provided you with the Children's Equity Project Report with 14 priorities to dismantle systemic racism. As it states "It is essential that young children receive an equitable, positive, and healthy start calling for bold reforms to the ECE system. Local public libraries are the best place to support families with growing children in preparation to enter school, ready to learn.

Next Slide

Where are we at in the process...

Next Slide

Today I am seeking advice from all of you on how to continue moving this project forward and ask for your support of this project as we work toward building a regional library that will uplift our community now and the generations ahead.

